



Ontario Women's Hockey League

RULES and REGULATIONS

2024-2025 Season

Section 1 – League Liaisons

Each Association/Independent team shall designate one person as the main contact for the League. This designated person shall be called the League Liaison. The responsibilities of the League Liaison (LL) shall be to maintain communication between the League and all teams of the Association/Independent team. The duties include the following:

- a) Communication between a team in the Association/Independent team and the League on all matters other than immediate scheduling.
- b) All discipline matters regarding any team in the Association.
- c) Notifying the League about teams the Association wishes to enter in the league for the next season of play by the date set out in Section 5 a).
- d) Registering the contact information for each team in the manner prescribed by the League by the required date as set annually by the League.
- e) Monitoring and ensuring that each team is duly registered with the League before its first league game.

The League Liaison must have full e-mail service and must inform the League of any changes in contact information immediately. The League Liaison must have the authority to speak for the Association at all times. The League Liaison is expected to attend the League General Meetings and vote upon issues for their Association/Independent team. The League will only deal with individual teams through the League Liaison.

It is the policy of the OWHL to respond only to concerns and issues raised by each association's League Liaison. Any comments other than operational questions sent directly to the OWHL will be forwarded back to the association's League Liaison in adherence to the policy.

Section 2 – Player Eligibility

- a) All players must be properly registered on their team's OWHA team registration form as per OWHA rules.
- b) To be eligible for League playoffs, all players must have played a minimum of five (5) Ontario Women's Hockey League (OWHL) league games with their OWHA registered/USA Hockey team prior to January 20th. Requests for exemption will not be considered after this date.
- c) An eligible player must play within the League. House league players will be eligible when picked up from within their own association.

Section 3 – Team Rosters

Players and staff must be registered on an approved roster with the OWHA before they are eligible to play in the OWHA / OWHL.

For USA Hockey-registered teams participating in the League, the USA Hockey registered team will be responsible for providing the OWHA with its official, approved USA Hockey team roster prior to their first League game. During the season, any addition to or deletion from the official USA Hockey roster must be identified to the OWHA by sending a copy of the approved updated USA Hockey roster to the OWHA to be approved before a player or staff is eligible to participate in the OWHL.

It is the responsibility of any OWHA team travelling to the USA for non-league games (including exhibition and tournament) to obtain appropriate sanction form from the OWHA. Forms are to be submitted to the OWHA for approval.

Section 4 – Association and Team Responsibility

- a) Teams applying for participating in this league, accept that there may be travel restrictions due to geography.
- b) Each Association and Independent team shall file its OWHL Application Form no later than August 15th of the current year.
- c) Any team that has any unresolved issues with the OWHA may not be eligible for participation within the league.
- d) The OWHL requires all teams must register to play at their assigned OWHA level each season. Teams will be required to play in the division and category to which they have been assigned by the OWHA. Teams/ Associations are responsible for assigning their teams to the appropriate categories. A final change may be made prior to the scheduling meeting if appropriate.
- e) If a team is re-categorized up at any point in time by the OWHA, they can continue with league play but will be ineligible for playoffs.
- f) If a team is re-categorized down at any point in time by the OWHA, they will still be eligible for OWHL playoffs at the level they began the regular season at.
- g) On or prior to a date set annually by the OWHA, each team shall supply a cheque or money order payable to the OWHA to cover the entry fees for the forthcoming season. The entry fees are non-refundable, unless the team provides written notice to the OWHA, on or prior to the OWHA Category Deadline Date, of its decision to withdraw from the League.
- h) Teams are required to a play two (2) mandatory OWHA sanctioned games against two (2) different teams at their own OWHA registered level or higher in order to place their team in the most appropriate category. RAMP Electronic game sheets must be used for this game so that the games can be verified.
- i) Each team must use RAMP Electronic Game sheets for all games.

Section 6 – Scheduling

- a) The OWHA will notify the League Liaisons of the date of the Scheduling meeting.
- b) Scheduling will provide flexibility to accommodate OWHA provincial playdowns and championships. Each team must undertake to have sufficient ice time to meet playoff requirements by the set completion date annually.
- c) All changes to game times, dates or locations of games must be reported to leagues@owha.on.ca at least forty-eight (48) hours before actual game time so the online system may be properly updated, and referees informed. Failure to do so may result in a \$50.00 fine payable by the HOME team.
- d) ALL games must be scheduled before leaving the scheduling meeting. Games are not allowed to be scheduled beyond the completion date for the regular season set out by the OWHA.
- e) All league games must be created and entered in the RAMP Game Portal at least 5 days prior to the start of the game. Failure to do so in the regular season may result in a fine of \$100 per day to the offending association until the game sheet data is entered.

Playoff Format: Format will be determined annually by the OWHA.

Section 7 – Pick-up Players

- a) A team may use any eligible player to a maximum of three (3) but not to exceed the number of players currently registered with their team. Pick-Ups are not permitted for suspended players.
- b) All Pick-Ups must be done through the RAMP Game Portal.
- c) For Regular Season League games, a team may pick up any eligible player, to a maximum of three (3) pick up players, from a lower category to bring the total team strength to, but not exceed, the number of officially registered players on the team. The Executive may authorize the movement of a goaltender for emergency situations only, identified as being situations in which the team would have no roster goalie available to play.
- d) Pick Up players are not eligible for playoffs. (Exception for Goalies with League approval).
- e) Special permission may be granted, on approval from the OWHA, for a team to pick up players from another Association or Independent team. It is the responsibility of the team to make specific written application (OWHA Pick-Up Rationale) to the League, stating their rationale for the request. The form can be found on the OWHA website and must be e-mailed to leagues@owha.on.ca.
- f) A Pick-Up Player is defined as EITHER from:
 - i) a lower age level and the same classification or lower.
 - ii) the same age level and lower classification:
 - (E.g.): 1 – U15 A team can call from U13 A team.
 - (E.g.): 2 – U15 A team can call from U13 BB team.
 - (E.g.): 3 - U15 A team can call from U15 BB team.
 - (E.g.): 4 – U15 A team can NOT call from U13 AA team.
- g) Any team found to have violated the Pick-Up Players rule by virtue of not having complied with any of the requirements or limits specified in Rule 7, subsections a) through e) will forfeit the

game in which the violation(s) was found to have occurred and by a score that is in accordance with subsection 9) of the Forfeiture Policy listed in the OWHA Handbook. Teams violating Rule 7, as above, will be considered by the League to have used an ineligible or illegal player and the violation will be reported to the OWHA as a suspendable offence.

- h) (Eastern League) House League Divisions exception is that house league teams may pick up a maximum of three (3) players laterally within the same category, same or lower age division.

Section 8 – Suspensions

All suspensions are managed by the OWHA.

- a) For any suspendable offence occurring in any game including a League game, the OWHA must be notified by the offending team within 24 hours via email at stats@owha.on.ca , or before their next game, whichever comes first. Failure to do so will result in a two-game suspension to the head coach.
- b) An email indicating a suspension issued or game served, must be submitted to the OWHA via stats@owha.on.ca immediately following the game. If a team has failed to send the documentation and the suspended player participates in a game, the head coach will be considered to have used an illegal player and the current OWHA discipline shall be levied.
- c) All members must follow the minimum suspension guidelines as circulated annually by the OWHA. These suspensions must be served at the next OWHA sanctioned event(s).
NOTE: Exhibition games are excluded.

Section 9 – Protests & Appeals

- a) Members can only protest a game regarding an interpretation or violation of a OWHL rule – e.g. not adhering to the agreed curfew, or if there is an improperly registered, unregistered, ineligible, or suspended player participating. Notification that a game is being protested MUST be communicated to protests@owha.on.ca within twenty-four (24) hours of the infraction(s).
- b) To Protest, a team must:
 - i. With respect to protest relating to the interpretation of a playing rule, notify the referee verbally of the protest before, during, or at the end of the game, before they leave the ice,
 - OR
 - ii. With respect to an improperly registered, unregistered, ineligible, or suspended player or team official, notify the OWHA Office within forty-eight (48) hours of the starting of the game. These are the only situations which are eligible to be protested to the League.
- c) Prepare the protest on the form provided.
- d) File the protest with protests@owha.on.ca within forty-eight (48) hours of the start time of the game.
- e) Accompany the protest with a cheque or money order in the amount of \$300.00 payable to the OWHA.
- f) E-mail, deliver or send by registered mail, a copy of the protest to the protested team within forty-eight (48) hours of the start time of the game.

- g) Within seven (7) days of the protest being filed, the OWHA shall set a date for the hearing of the protest. The hearing date will be no more than fifteen (15) days after the filing date. Teams attending a OWHL Protest Hearing must be represented by a rostered staff member.
- h) Decisions are final and binding and are not subject to an appeal.
- i) Refunded fees for protests and appeals will be at the discretion of the respective committee.

Section 10 – Officials

- a) Complaints / concerns go to discipline@owha.on.ca
- b) It is recognized that there is currently a critical shortage of certified officials in Ontario and in Canada. As such, games may proceed with fewer than the ideal number of on-ice officials. Some games normally officiated by 3 officials will be officiated by 2 officials. At certain levels, a 1 official system may be utilized with prior OWHA approval. At all times, associations and coaches are to be in control of themselves and their teams and support fair play for all involved,
- c) It is the responsibility of every association, team, and participant to always treat officials with respect. If there are concerns, there is a process to address these concerns after the completion of the game.
- d) All officials must be currently certified and provide their OWHA (or Hockey Quebec) referee number or certification number along with their name to the timekeeper so that this can be entered on the RAMP Electronic Gamesheet App.
- e) All officials MUST use the RAMP Electronic Gamesheet for their games. The games must be signed off by the official with 24 hours of the game being played.
- f) In U15 AA, U15 A, U18 AA, U18 A, U18 BB, U22 A, a three-referee system is desirable. In all other divisions, a two-referee system is desired. Failure to comply (schedule the appropriate number of officials) may result in a fine of \$100 against the offending team.
- g) A game may proceed with one official less than the number required provided that the official(s) and both teams agree before the game commences. Once started the game may not be stopped or protested unless an injury occurs to the referee that prevents the official from completing the game. If the game does not proceed it is considered un-played and must be rescheduled within seven (7) days. A single on-ice official may not officiate a scheduled three-official game without prior approval from the OWHA. Any game officiated in a manner that is not compliant with this section will be considered not played and must be re-scheduled within seven (7) days and will result in a fine of \$200 against each team; in addition, the coach of each team will be suspended for one game.
- h) All games will use the fast face-off protocol. The puck shall be put into play at the indicated start time of the game regardless of whether both teams are lined up in face off position.
- i) Officials are to be at ice level at game time and are to order the clock started for a three (3) minutes warm up period as soon as both nets are pegged and available for the teams to begin their warmup. Once the game clock has started, the officials shall initiate the Fair Play procedures. When two minutes have elapsed, a game official will blow the whistle to let the teams know they have one minute to get to their benches and get their starting line up to centre ice. If teams fail to be ready a delay of game penalty is to be assessed.

Section 11 – Cancellation and Rescheduling Rules

- a) After scheduling day(s), teams will be allowed a period of three (3) calendar days to change times and/or locations of games on the originally submitted schedule, after which time the team's schedule will be marked Final and entered into the League's on-line game system. Any changes made during the 3-day grace period must be made known to the team's opponent. After a team's regular season schedule is marked final, each team will be allowed to rearrange a maximum of three (3) games during the season.
- b) Cancellation of a regular season, playoff or championship game by a team may be done without cancellation penalty up to two weeks (14 days) prior to the day a game is scheduled. Any cancelled game must be rescheduled as provided below.
- c) Ice costs for a game cancelled less than two weeks before the game day becomes the responsibility of the team which gives notice of cancellation unless the ice is used by the non-cancelling team, or some other team. In addition, the cancelling team may be assessed a minimum \$100.00 disciplinary fine payable to the League.
- d) Games cancelled must be rescheduled for a future date within seven (7) days of game cancellation. Any team that does not reschedule within the seven (7) day period may be assessed a \$100.00 disciplinary fine payable to the OWHA. A rescheduled game is not considered to be locked into the schedule until the Convenor for that division has been notified.
- e) The OWHA reserves the right to issue an additional \$500.00 fine, payable to the OWHA, to any team who either fails to show for a scheduled league game without just cause; cancels a scheduled league game within twenty-four (24) hours of its playing time without just cause; or refuses to reschedule a cancelled game. In addition, the OWHA shall have the right to suspend all or any member of the team staff of the offending team for up to one (1) year and to refuse the admission of teams from the offending association for the next season.
- f) For the purposes of this, Section 11, a team that withdraws from the League shall be deemed to have cancelled all of its remaining scheduled games.
- g) If a game must be cancelled because one or both teams cannot travel due to inclement weather, the following policy is in effect:
 - 1. The team cancelling the game must DIRECTLY contact by PHONE and speak to a designated team representative before this game is officially considered cancelled.
Note: E-mail and voice messages will not be considered as proper notification
 - 2. Both teams must notify leagues@owha.on.ca that the game has been cancelled.
 - 3. The cancelled game is to be rescheduled for a future date within seven (7) days.
 - 4. Costs of unused ice time and officials for the cancelled game will be the responsibility of the home team.
 - 5. To be eligible for any League awards, teams must play all their regular season games.

Section 12 – Starting Games Times

The following guideline for Regular Season and Playoff game start times must be followed unless alternate arrangements are mutually agreed upon by both teams:

- Monday to Friday game start times must be such that starting travel time from the visiting centre is no earlier than 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday to Thursday game start times must be such that allowing for a reasonable post-game change period, the visiting team arrives home no later than:
 - U9 – 9:00 p.m.
 - U11/U13/U15 – 10:30 p.m.
 - U18/U22 – 11:30 p.m.

Section 13 – Game Lengths

Teams in the OWHL-SOUTHERN Divisions and Categories to follow:

- a) All League games including Championship games shall consist of three (3) stop time periods of ten, ten, twelve (10-10-12) OR fifteen, fifteen, flood, fifteen (15-15-Flood-15) as designated for that division.
 - The following divisions will play 10-10-12.
 - All U9
 - All U11
 - U13 A, BB, B, C
 - U15 BB, B, C
 - U18 B, C
 - The following divisions will play 15-15-Flood-15
 - All Senior
 - All U22
 - U18 AA, A, BB
 - U15 AA, A
 - U13 AA

Teams in the OWHL-EASTERN Divisions and Categories to follow:

- The following divisions will play 1.5-hour games 15-15-Flood-20:
 - U18 AA, A & BB
 - U15 AA, A & BB

 - The following divisions will play 1.0-hour games 10-10-12.
 - All Other teams.
- b) All League games are STOP TIME. Running time is not allowed and, if used, the game will be replayed at the cost of the home team.
- c) No time outs are allowed in regular season games. If a team request a time out during a regular season game, the team may be fined \$100.00, and the coach will be suspended for one game.
- d) The number of regular season games will be standardized.

Section 14 – Electronic Game Sheets

- a) Electronic game sheet data is collected, and any falsification of data may result in suspensions and may impact insurance coverage. It is important that the game sheet data be entered accurately both during and as soon as the game has been completed.
- b) The officials must review the data entered into the electronic game sheet via the code they have been provided and sign off on the game as soon as possible following the end of the game.
- c) It is the responsibility of the team that assigns the game officials to ensure that all officials sign off of the electronic gamesheet. Failure to follow this process will result in fines being levied to the association.
- d) It is the responsibility of the home team to provide the game codes to other parties (visiting team, officials, and timekeeper). Both the home and visiting team must access the electronic game sheet, via their respective code, to select the players and staff for that particular game at least fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled game time.
- e) All teams must use the RAMP Game sheets for all League games. Failure to do so is a \$25 fine per game payable to the OWHA.
- f) If any players on your team have different sweater numbers for home and away, then please modify the appropriate numbers via the game sheet app. You DO NOT have to name your starting line-up. With the exception of goalie, player positions are not necessary. The option to identify your C's and A's is available through the game sheet app by selecting the player's name and choosing their role.

Section 15 – Notification of Game Results

- a. It is the responsibility of both teams to confirm the stats of the game. If there are any discrepancies, both teams should be emailing game details to leagues@owha.on.ca.
- b. In the case of a suspendable offence, whether in the regular season or in the playoffs, the offending team must notify the OWHHA via email at stats@owha.on.ca with suspension information within 1 day (24 hours) of the game in which the suspension was issued or before the next game, whichever comes first.

Section 16 – Tie-Breakers – Regular Season

- a) If teams are tied at the end of the Regular Season the following criteria will be followed: (same as OWHHA Playdowns)
 - i. Number of wins against all divisional opponents, including crossover games.
 - ii. Record against other tied teams
 - iii. Goals scored minus goals against all divisional opponents.
 - iv. Fewest goals allowed against all divisional opponents.
 - v. Most periods won against all divisional opponents.
 - vi. First goal scored during regular season.
 - vii. Most goals scored against all divisional opponents.
 - viii. Flip of coin by a neutral party agreed to by the OWHHA Designate.

Section 17 – Curfews

1. All League games are expected to start at their designated starting times. Curfews will be allowed for all regular season games.
2. All League games shall consist of three (3) stop time periods as designated for that division. (Refer to Section 13 – Game Lengths)
3. In order to maximize the ice time, players should warm up and complete their pregame cheer prior to getting on the ice. A three (3) minute warm up will start each game.
4. All League games are STOP time. Running time is not allowed and, if used, may result in the game being replayed if the visiting team loses the game.
5. All Regular season games played under OWHL jurisdiction must have a curfew notice showing on the RAMP Electronic Game sheet. When a team creates a game through the RAMP Game Portal, after all the game details are entered, in the NOTES box, please enter the Curfew information. This information will show on the RAMP Gamesheet APP in the game details just above the game codes.
 - a. In arenas where there is a curfew, the notification will state “CURFEW and a specified time of day” (e.g. CURFEW 10:20 p.m.). The game must stop at the specified time.
 - b. All game officials (referee(s) & timekeepers) must be notified of the curfew as well. They will be able to see this information via the RAMP Game sheet app on the game details page.
 - c. Failure to follow any of Rule 5, subsections a) through d) could result in a forfeit of the game by the home team should the game be protested. If, in the sole judgement of the OWHA and its Protest Committee, the result of the game was not affected by the breaking of Curfew rule, the protest can be dismissed. The league does retain the right to fine the home team a maximum of \$200.00 in the event the home team does not follow the provisions of Section 17.
 - d. The actual start time of the game is to be recorded by the timekeeper. For the purpose of the time of day, the arena clock will be the official time piece. In the case of no time-of-day clock being present, the referee(s) will designate, prior to the start of the game, what the official time piece will be and advise both coaches of such a decision.
 - e. It will be the responsibility of the timekeeper to sound the end of game horn when the official time piece reaches the designated curfew time, and the game will be considered over at that point. Under no circumstances is the game to continue past the designated curfew time.

6. Games that must be curfewed due to a serious injury that requires medical assistance to be called or due to a serious mechanical equipment failure in the arena that makes playing dangerous or impossible are permitted to be ended even if the game sheet says no curfew. The referee makes this decision.
7. Any regular season game curfewed after the start of the third period will be considered a complete game at the point of curfew. Any regular season game curfewed before the start of the third period will be considered to have been cancelled within the rules and without penalty and may be required to be rescheduled.